

Steps to Successful Capital Campaigns

By Dave Eitland

I. Institutional Readiness

- A. Does institution have a clear mission and vision?
- B. Is the institution fiscally sound and viable?
- C. Is there stable leadership? Does the CEO intend to stay during the duration of the campaign?
- D. Does the Board of Directors endorse the project and have a clear major gift “track record” of philanthropy to the institution?
- E. Is there enough advancement/fund raising staff to implement the project? How will outside counsel be used?
- F. Does the institution have a record of six and seven figure gifts?
- G. Are there 12 to 30 people willing to volunteer their time to serve on various campaign leadership committees? Who will be the campaign (co-chairs)?
- H. Does the institution have a planned giving and endowment building program in place?
- I. Does the institution have a donor recognition and stewardship plan they normally implement for giving?

II. Clear articulation of need

- A. How will fulfilling this need fortify the mission and vision of organization?
- B. How will fulfilling this need take the organization to the next level of service or expertise?
- C. How long will these needs be fulfilled by doing this capital campaign?
- D. Is the need verifiable by the community and experts in the field?
- E. Will there be a phased approach in completing the need?

III. **Creating of Case Statement**

- A. What are you trying to accomplish?
- B. What problem will be solved?
- C. How will doing the campaign change people's lives?
- D. Who is being asked to support the campaign?
- E. How much money do you need to fulfill the goal?
- F. How will my personal gift impact the campaign?
- G. Can one clearly see the need? (Yes, that makes sense!)

IV. **Development of Campaign Plan**

- A. How will the campaign be conducted?
- B. Are timelines developed?
- C. Are roles and expectations defined?
 - 1. Does everyone know what everyone else is doing to make the campaign success?
- D. How will a campaign goal be established? Does it include campaign costs?

V. **Budget**

- A. How much will the campaign cost?
 - 1. A campaign budget can be between 10% to 20% depending on the scope of the campaign.
- B. Do you have enough staff or will you be using consultants to supplement staff?
- C. Do you have enough volunteers to implement the campaign?
- D. How many and what kind of interpretive materials and strategies will you use to articulate the need to the various constituencies?

E. How many meetings, training events, special events, kick-offs, report meetings, celebration and acknowledge events?

F. What will be the cost of processing gifts?

G. What will be the cost of acknowledging gifts?

H. Will this cost be “billed” to the campaign and incorporated into the overall goal?

VI. **Prospecting**

A. Is there a community awareness of the need?

1. How will you raise the level of awareness of need?

2. How will you tell your existing contributors of need?

B. Can you identify 100 major gift prospects including the top prospect who will give 15% of the goal? Do you have enough prospects in keeping with your scale of giving?

C. Do you have people in your giving base ready to give sacrificially and in extraordinary ways?

D. As measured through established fund raising practices, do you have enough prospects to support a campaign?

1. If not, how are you going to acquire them?

E. When was the last time the donor base has been electronically screened and evaluated for accuracy and acquiring public information to make sound judgment calls on who is a prospect and who is not?

F. How many profiles on prospects can staff generate so those prospects can be properly rated in ability to give, interest in the organization, and linkage with organization? How will this be electronically tracked?

G. How will you use volunteers in this process?

H. How have you insured the confidentiality of the process?

VII. **Recruitment of volunteer leadership**

A. Is the campaign organization clearly defined?

- B. Are expectations of individual volunteers clearly defined as to task and time expectation?
- C. How will they be trained?
- D. How will staff in the campaign process support volunteers?
- E. Can leadership see how they will impact the success of the campaign?
- F. How will the board be involved in the campaign process?
- G. Will there be an honorary chair to the campaign and how will that person be used in the promotion of the need of the campaign?
- H. How will successful leadership be acknowledged?

VIII. **Materials**

- A. When and what kind of campaign materials need to be developed?
- B. Are they designed in such a way that volunteers will be proud to use them?
- C. Do they explain the need in a clear fashion?
- D. Do they use a consistent look and use of campaign themes and logos?
- E. Are they easy to use? Do they have a “wow” factor without looking “slick?” Is the look consistent with institutional materials and “look?”
- F. Will these materials be produce “in house” or contracted on the “outside?” Is the institution read to hire additional resources to make this happen?
- G. How will new communication technologies be used creatively in the campaign? (Internet, email newsletters, web casts and cams, web development) Is there enough “bandwidth,” hardware, technical support and desire to make this happen?

IX. **Communications**

- A. Is there a communication plan? Budget?
- B. Will there be an ongoing newsletter? Traditional or electronic?

- C. Will there be informational meetings to key leadership?
- D. What other media will be used to communicate the campaign?
- E. Who will implement the plan? Staff? Committee?
- F. F. How will you use hard copy newsletters, traditional media, internet, email newsletters, website, blogs, twitter, etc.?

X. **Solicitation**

- A. Do volunteers have necessary training and materials to do solicitations?
- B. Is the solicitation sequenced to create the most momentum?
 - 1. Is the solicitation being done in a timely fashion?
 - 2. Are the highest potential contributors being called upon first?
- C. Is the “quiet” phase, soliciting the highest contributors first, staying quiet?
- D. At what point will the campaign go “public”? (60% to 70% of goal)
- E. How will every contributor be made to feel that his or her gift is important to the success of the campaign?

XI. **Monitoring**

- A. Are staff assigned and trained in the way volunteers will be supported through out the campaign process?
- B. Is follow-up happening?
- C. Are time lines being fulfilled?
- D. Are goals being met per the timeline?

XII. **Pledge and gift processing**

- A. Does the organization have a donations database that is able to track prospects and donors, create prospect profiles and pledge reminders? How do is it? Was it designed to track donations?

- B. Are there established procedures of how gifts will be counted and what kinds of gifts will be accepted?
- C. Are pledges and gifts recorded in a timely fashion?
- D. Are pledges and gifts acknowledged in a timely fashion and consistent with Internal Revenue Service regulations?
- E. How will estate and planned gifts be counted toward the campaign?
- F. How will pledge reminders are sent in a timely fashion?
- G. What reports are needed for the campaign?
- H. Who will be responsible for donor recognition and stewardship? Is there a plan?

XIII. Acknowledgement and Celebration

- A. Are there Named Gift Opportunities?
- B. How will gifts be recognized? How will they be communicated to the public?
- C. Is the recognition in direct and legal portion to the gift received?
- D. Is the recognition done tastefully and in keeping with the style of the organization?
- E. How will leadership, volunteers and staff be acknowledged?
- F. If in a facility, how will recognition be done? Donor walls?
- G. What kind of community celebration will take place?

XIV. Evaluation and Final Report

- A. Was the goal met and budget kept in line?
- B. Was the campaign a positive experience for all involved?
- C. Has staff conveyed a final report to leadership and volunteers?

XV. Next Steps

A. Is there another campaign to launch?

B. How will contributors be incorporated in the on-going philanthropic life of the organization?

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